

VZCZCXRO3818
PP RUEHROV
DE RUEHJM #0179 0231628
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 231628Z JAN 09
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3924
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 000179

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE. NSC FOR SHAPIRO/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/22/2024
TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: HAMAS RE-ESTABLISHES CONTROL IN GAZA

REF: JERUSALEM 163

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary. Gaza contacts told PolOffs January 21-22 that Hamas remains in control of the Gaza Strip, opening public offices, restarting limited services, and deploying security forces in the streets. Contacts said Gazans are able to move freely and stores are open, but many are still homeless and do not have cash to buy needed goods. Hamas spokesmen said publicly that Gaza offices will reopen by January 24 and that Hamas will continue to provide services despite the damage. End Summary.

HAMAS IN CONTROL OF GAZA CITY
AFTER ISRAELI OPERATION

12. (C) Amani al-Kirim, Office Director for the former Gaza City Governor Muhammad al-Qidwa, told PolOff January 21 that Hamas has re-established control of the Gaza Strip. Personnel returned to remaining government buildings the day that the IDF withdrew, she said, and Hamas executive force officers are back patrolling the streets. She said the Executive Force controls the entrances to al-Shifa Hospital and checks everyone entering. Life in Gaza City is stabilizing, al-Kirim said; stores are open and goods are available for purchase, although very few are yet venturing out to shop. She said the Hamas-controlled ministries ordered offices and schools to reopen by January 24. Al-Kirim commented that IDF operations led to death and destruction, but no real change.

HAMAS IN CONTROL AS SOUTHERN
GAZA TOWNS BEGIN RECOVERY

13. (C) The Mayor of Abasan al-Jadida, Abdul Rauf Asfur, told PolOff January 21 that Hamas is retaking control. He said there is limited police presence in the village of Abasan al-Jadida (pop. 8,000), but Force is visible in nearby Bani Suhaylah. He said stores are open, but the shortage of cash prevents Gazans from purchasing necessities. Asfur said the Municipality reopened January 20 and is conducting a damage assessment in order to start rebuilding homes and public buildings.

14. (C) The Mayor of Abasan al-Kabira, Mustafa al-Shawwaf, told PolOff January 22 that he and his constituents had hoped the cease-fire would include the opening of the Gaza crossings. However, the siege remains and Hamas is still in power. Al-Shawwaf said Abasan al-Kabira's residents are grateful for USAID support and hope more aid is forthcoming.

15. (C) The Mayor of al-Qarrara, Eid Sulayman Abdullah, told PolOff January 22 that Gazans are unhappy with Israel and Hamas for recent hostilities. The Executive Force is operating out of a tent near the destroyed police

headquarters in al-Qarrara, he said. He said people are able to move freely around town, but most are staying home. Abdullah said Gazans are still suffering from the cold, damaged houses, and fear of additional Israeli attacks.

REOPENING OFFICES, SCHOOLS
TO FACILITATE RETURN TO NORMALCY

16. (C) Gaza-based Hamas spokesman Tahir al-Nunu announced that "ministries" in Gaza would reopen January 21, and Secretary of the "cabinet" Muhammad Awad said employees are expected to report for work as of January 24. Al-Nunu said the quick return would facilitate the resumption of normal life and the beginning of reconstruction in Gaza. He added that Hamas will carry out its "responsibilities" to Gazans despite the destruction of many buildings by IDF operations.

WALLES